

Early school-leavers

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Early School-Leavers

ROA Fact Sheet

ROA-F-2012/2E

Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt | ROA
Research Centre For Education and the Labour Market | ROA

1. Introduction

What reasons do early school-leavers give for their prematurely leaving school? What were the early signals? Were they bullied more often than their fellow pupils who did obtain a diploma? What is the current occupation of these early school-leavers; have they returned to school, are they working, or neither? And, looking back, do they regret their decision to leave school prematurely?

To answer these questions, a survey was held among 2,145 early school-leavers without a diploma in the Autumn of 2011. These so-called dropouts were pupils who left secondary school (Preparatory Vocational Secondary Education (PVSE), Senior General Secondary Education (SGSE), or Pre-University Education (PUE)) or Secondary Vocational Education (SVE) in the 2009/2010 school year without having obtained a basic qualification¹².

The present survey among unqualified school-leavers is part of the annual school-leaver surveys carried out by the Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA). ROA has carried out these school-leaver surveys since the early 90s. For a number of sections of the questionnaires, the items for unqualified and qualified respondents are the same, allowing a comparison between the two groups for a number of key indicators. "Qualified" in this case refers to school-leavers who left school with a diploma, regardless whether this constituted a basic qualification or not.

2. Respondents' background characteristics

To give an idea of the composition of the data, some background characteristics of the respondents are listed below. For a more detailed overview of the background characteristics by education level, refer to Table B1 in the annexes.

The group of dropouts described in this fact sheet, does not correspond to the total group of dropouts defined at the national level. As the focus is on the reasons for prematurely leaving school, those who did obtain a diploma not qualifying for the labour market (level 1 SGSE), have not been included in the sample. In fact, these individuals have not terminated their course and hence cannot be asked about their reasons for terminating the course. The background characteristics described here, may therefore differ from the background characteristics of the total population of dropouts in the Netherlands.

Education level

Of all respondents, one in ten did a course at SGSE or PUE level in the 2009/2010 school year, approximately two in ten

did a course at PVSE level, while the others did a course at SVE level.

Age and gender

The average age of the dropouts in this survey is 19 years and just over half of the respondents is female. Among respondents at SVE Levels 3/4, the percentage of women is fairly high (60%), whereas it is somewhat lower (40%) among PVSE respondents.

Ethnicity

Three out of every four dropout respondents are indigenous. Nevertheless, this percentage is slightly lower than among qualified respondents: 83% of all qualified respondents is indigenous. At PVSE level and SVE Levels 1/2, there is also a relatively large group of dropout respondents who are non-Western immigrants (18% and 20%, respectively).

Family situation and children

Almost half of all dropout respondents is from a two-parent family, against 81% of the qualified respondents. Of the dropouts at SVE Levels 3/4 in this survey, 21% live on their own. This is a fairly high percentage, compared with the total number of dropout respondents (14% of whom live on their own). SVE dropouts were the relatively most likely ones to indicate that they had a child (14% of all dropouts at SVE Levels 1/2 and 7% of the dropouts at SVE Levels 3/4). In particular women fail to complete their education because of children: 89% of the respondents with a child is female.

The dropouts from SGSE/PUE in this survey were the most likely ones to come from a two-parent family, to not have any children, and to (almost) always speak Dutch with their parents. Their parents are also most likely to be higher educated (HVE/UE³). Dropouts who prematurely terminated a course at SVE Levels 1/2 were the least likely ones to come from a two-parent family and to (almost) always speak Dutch at home. They also most often indicated that they had a child and that their parents had a low-level education (Lower Secondary General Education (LGSE)/ Initial Professional Education (IPE)⁴, or PVSE).

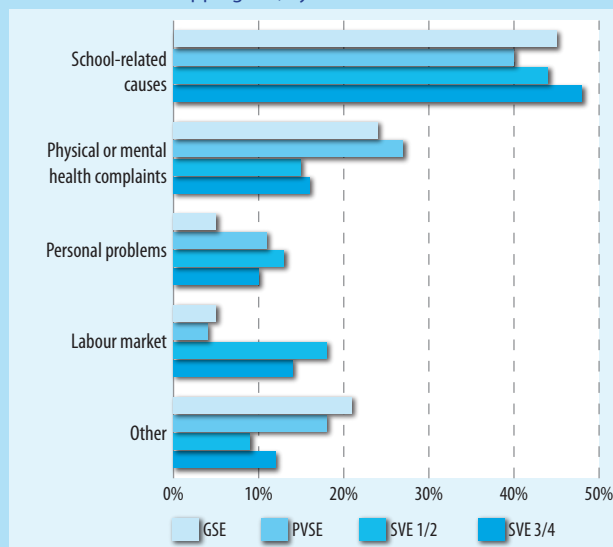
3. Main reasons for dropping out

The dropouts were given a list of 19 possible reasons, in which they could indicate to what extent each of the reasons played a role in their decision to stop their course prematurely. They were then asked which of these reasons was the main one for dropping out. Figure 1 provides a clustered overview of these main reasons for dropping out, sorted by education level. For a full list of main reasons, see Table B2 in the annexes.

1. PVSE equals the Dutch term VMBO, SGSE equals HAVO, PUE equals VWO, SVE equals MBO.
2. A basic qualification is a diploma at the SVE level 2 or higher.

3. HVE equals the Dutch term HBO, UE equals WO.
4. LGSE equals the Dutch term MAVO, IPE equals VBO.

Figure 1
Main reasons for dropping out, by education level



In all, school-related causes are reported most often as the main reason for dropping out (45%). The second place is for physical and mental health complaints (18%). This means that the most common reasons for dropping out are similar to those in previous years.

Figure 1 shows that dropouts at all education levels indicate that a school-related cause was the main reason for their dropping out. The most frequently mentioned reasons that come under this heading are “the content of the course was not what I wanted (after all)”, “the course was badly organised”, and “the course was too difficult and/or I failed the final examination”. Dropouts from SVE Levels 3/4 most often mention school-related causes, compared to dropouts from other education levels (48%). Both among male and among female dropouts, school-related causes are the most common main reason. The same goes for indigenous and immigrant dropouts. This indicates that gender or ethnicity play no role in referring to school-related causes as the main reason for dropping out.

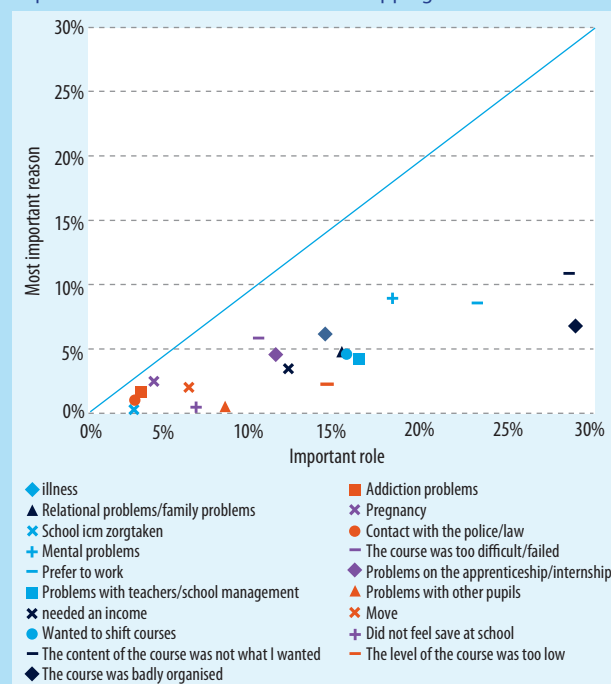
Physical and mental health complaints are mentioned more often by SGSE/PUE (24%) and PVSE (27%) dropouts than by SVE (Levels 1/2: 15%, and Levels 3/4: 16%) dropouts as main reason for leaving school prematurely. Half of this main category consists of dropouts who mentioned “mental problems” as the main reason. “Illness” is another common reason listed in this category. Of all dropouts who refer to physical or mental health complaints as the main reason, the majority is female (61%). The percentage of immigrant and indigenous dropouts is comparable to the percentage in the sample, which means that ethnicity appears to play no role in mentioning physical or mental health complaints as the main reason.

The labour market is mentioned relatively more often as a reason for leaving school prematurely by SVE dropouts (Levels 1/2: 18%, and Levels 3/4: 14%) than by SGSE/PUE dropouts (5%) and PVSE dropouts (4%). This is not entirely surprising, because SVE students come into

contact with the labour market through their traineeship/work placement and hence are probably more exposed to this ‘pull factor’. Also among boys and immigrants (both Western and non-Western), the labour market is mentioned slightly more often as the main reason for dropping out.

Figure 2 shows whether there is a relationship between the reasons mentioned as having played a (very) important role in the decision to drop out of a course ((‘very) important role’) and the reasons mentioned as having been crucial for the decision (‘main reason’). The points in the diagram represent the 19 reasons for dropping out. The further a point is (horizontally) removed from the diagonal dotted line, the more dropouts mentioned this reason as having played a (very) important role, but not as the decisive reason. The fact that the points, as one moves further to the right on the X axis, are increasingly further removed from the dotted line, indicates that many dropouts listed multiple reasons as (very) important for their decision.

Figure 2
Important role versus main reason for dropping out



At the bottom left in the figure, there is a cluster of points. These are reasons that were mentioned relatively little by dropouts as having played a (very) important role in their decision to leave school prematurely, but where those who did mention this as having played a (very) important role, usually also referred to it as the main reason. For example, there are relatively few dropouts for whom addiction issues played a (very) important role (■), but for those who faced addiction issues, it was often also the main reason for dropping out.

On the right-hand side of the diagram, there are several points that are quite far from the diagonal dotted line. The reasons ‘the course was badly organised’ (◆) is the

furthest removed from the dotted line. This means that there are relatively many dropouts for whom the inadequate organisation of the course played a (very) important role in their decision to leave school prematurely, but that there are relatively few dropouts for whom this was the crucial factor (main reason) for their decision. The same goes for dropouts who chose the wrong course ('(content of) the course was not what I wanted'), who preferred to take a job, or who had mental problems. There are relatively many dropouts for whom mental problems played a (very) important role in their decision, but for a large majority of these dropouts the mental problems were not the decisive factor.

3.1 Early signals for dropping out

The dropouts were asked whether they had ever skipped school and if so, how often and why. The results show that 60% of all dropouts skipped school at some stage, of whom one third (34%) did so once or twice a week, or (almost) every day. This is an increase of the percentage of truants against the previous survey (2010). In the latter survey, 52% said that they had skipped school at some stage. Within the group of truants, the frequency of skipping school is comparable to the previous survey. Of the SVE dropouts, more than half (Levels 1/2: 59%, and Levels 3/4: 70%) reported having skipped school. Of all secondary education dropouts, slightly less than half (48% of SGSE/PUE and 44% of the PVSE dropouts) had skipped school at some stage. The increase of the percentage of truants, however, need not mean that there is an increase of truancy. Because of all the (policy and other) measures, the number of dropouts has decreased in the past few years, increasingly leaving the 'hard core' of dropouts. Table 1 lists the reasons for skipping school, divided into five main categories, by education level of the truant dropouts. For the full list of the reasons for skipping school, refer to Table B3 in the annexes.

Table 1 shows that a school-related cause was the most common reason for skipping school (49%). The most frequently mentioned reasons in this category were "because some lessons were not interesting" and "because the entire course was uninteresting". Dropouts at all education levels mentioned school-related causes most often as reasons for skipping school. Among the dropouts at SVE Levels 3/4, there is even a majority (58%) who stated this as a reason for truancy.

Mental and physical health complaints were listed as truancy reasons in particular by SGSE/PUE (22%) and PVSE (24%) dropouts. This category consists mainly of dropouts who said that the reason for skipping school was "because I was too tired". There are also several dropouts who mentioned "mental problems" as a reason for truancy.

Relatively few dropouts skipped school because of personal problems (4%). Within this category, a problematic home environment was the primary reason for truancy.

The lure of the labour market was an important reason for skipping school for particularly dropouts from SVE Levels 1/2 (13%). It is not surprising that SVE pupils are most likely to skip school because of the lure of the labour

market, because they are the most likely to get into contact with the labour market during their studies.

Lastly, there are quite a few dropouts who indicated that there was 'another' reason for their truancy (22%). This shows that the reasons for skipping school are often very diverse and differ for each person.

Truancy may be an early signal for dropping out. This is likely in particular when a certain factor is both a reason for truancy and the main reason for dropping out. Table 2 shows that the reason for skipping school often corresponds with the main reason for dropping out. This can be seen in the highlighted fields, which represent the highest percentages in the rows.

A large majority of dropouts who mentioned 'school-related causes' as a reason for truancy (60%), also referred to 'school-related causes' as the main reason for dropping out. Half of the dropouts who mentioned 'personal problems' as the reason for truancy (50%), also referred to 'personal problems' as the main reason for dropping out. This indicates that in particular among pupils who have problems at school or who have personal problems, truancy can be an early signal for dropping out. To pick up this early signal, truants should be monitored and coached more intensively. It is wise to pay extra attention to truants who mention school-related causes (lessons and/or the course are uninteresting, too difficult, or too easy; cancelled lessons; problems in class, either with fellow pupils or with teachers, bullying) or personal problems (problematic home environment; private problems; pregnancy) as reasons for skipping school.

The dropouts were asked with whom they spoke about their decision to leave school, before they definitely abandoned the course. The dropouts whose reason for skipping school corresponded with the main reason for dropping out, had slightly more often talked with 'someone' about their decision to leave school than the total group of dropouts (83% against 81%). The people with whom they spoke more often, were in particular their parents (77% instead of 69%) and friends (27% instead of 20%). Surprisingly, dropouts whose reason for truancy corresponds with the main reason for leaving school prematurely, turn out to have spoken about their choice with individuals within school a little less (see the bottom four lines in Table 3). Dropouts who had never skipped school, on the other hand, had spoken more often with individuals within school about their decision to leave school. In this group of dropouts, there are at any rate more who had spoken with 'someone' (86%). It is possible that the dropouts who had never skipped school, in principle would like to have stayed at school, which is why they skipped school less and tried harder to talk with people about their decision to leave school prematurely.

The dropouts were asked whether they were forced by school to abandon their course, because the maximum duration had been reached (having failed the final exam twice) or because they had broken school rules. Most dropouts (83%) replied that they had not been forced by

Table 1

Reasons for skipping school, by education level (%)

Reason for skipping school	Education level				Total
	GSE	PVSE	SVE 1/2	SVE 3/4	
School-related causes	42	32	43	58	49
Physical or mental health complaints	22	24	16	17	18
Personal problems	5	6	5	3	4
Labour market	2	5	13	6	8
Other	31	34	22	16	22
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 2

Reason for skipping school, by main reason for dropping out (%)

Reason for skipping school	Main reason for dropping out					Total
	School-related causes	Physical or mental health complaints	Personal problems	Labour market	Other	
School-related causes	60	10	6	14	11	100%
Physical or mental health complaints	28	42	9	9	12	100%
Personal problems	10	18	50	6	17	100%
Labour market	31	3	17	43	5	100%
Other	38	17	16	14	16	100%

Table 3

With whom did you talk about your decision to leave school? (%)

Spoken with whom	All	Reason for skipping school=reason for dropping out	Never skipped school
No one	19	17	14
Someone	81	83	86
Parents	69	77	75
Brothers/Sisters	11	10	11
Friends	20	27	16
Teachers	18	19	20
Mentor	34	31	37
School management	16	12	18
Care Advisory Team	12	11	15

Table 4

Who, according to the dropouts, has tried to keep them from leaving school? (%)

	Who has tried to help you, and what was the objective			
	No one tried to help	Someone (school and/or other institutions) tried to help, namely:		
		School	Other institutions	School / Other institutions
		Diploma	Diploma	Other course
		% helped	% helped	% helped
Total	45	38	21	27
Education level				
GSE	41	48	23	26
PVSE	28	46	34	49
SVE 1/2	51	34	19	23
SVE 3/4	47	35	16	23
Reason for dropping out				
School-related causes	49	33	15	25
Physical or mental health complaints	32	49	29	34
Personal problems	42	36	32	27
Labour market	43	42	21	25
Other	49	36	17	30

school to stop the course. In PVSE, this percentage is slightly lower (70%). The dropouts were also asked whether their school and/or other institutions had made any attempts to prevent their dropping out, by helping them get a diploma after all and/or by helping them switch to another course. Multiple answers could be given. Table 4 shows the results of the answers given to this question, broken down by education level and main reason for dropping out.

Table 4 shows that 45% of the dropouts indicated that there had been no one who had tried to prevent their dropping out. This means that, according to them, neither the school nor any other institution had made an attempt to help them obtain a diploma after all or to switch to another course. Of those who said that they had been helped, most indicated that they were helped by the school to obtain a diploma (38%).

Broken down by education level, in particular SVE dropouts indicated that no one had tried to help them (51% SVE Levels 1/2, 47% SVE Levels 3/4). PVSE dropouts were relatively least likely to indicate that no one had made any attempt to help them (28%). This difference between the (experienced) attempts to help between SVE dropouts and PVSE dropouts could be related to the differences in the organisation and coaching between PVSE and SVE schools. In PVSE schools, pupils receive a relatively large amount of coaching, whereas in SVE schools pupils are expected to show more independence. At all education levels, more than a third to one half of the dropouts who indicated that someone had tried to help them, said that their school (among others) had tried to help them obtain a diploma after all. Of the PVSE dropouts, 49% indicated that their school (among others) and/or other institutions had made attempts to help them switch to another course. It is likely that this high percentage is related to the fact that PVSE pupils who (are about to) drop out, are accepted in SVE without having obtained a PVSE diploma.

Broken down by main reason for dropping out, the results show that in particular dropouts who stopped because of school-related causes indicated that no one had tried to help them (49%). The dropouts who had stopped because of physical or mental health complaints, were least likely to indicate that no one had tried to help them (32%). Among all reasons for dropping out, most of the dropouts who indicated that someone had tried to help them, said that their school (among others) had tried to help them obtain a diploma after all.

Looking at these results, it should be noted that these need not have been actual attempts by schools or other institutions to help (or the lack thereof). It is possible that attempts were made to prevent dropouts from leaving school, but that these attempts were not experienced as such. It is also possible that the pupil concerned was not receptive to help, as a result of which the attempts were (eventually) stopped. Nevertheless, it remains remarkable that so many dropouts indicated (to have had the impression) that they were not helped by anyone.

3.2 Bullying

Both qualified school-leavers and dropouts were asked whether they had ever been bullied, and if so what the reason was for the bullying. Figure 3 shows - broken down by education level - relatively how many dropouts and qualified school-leavers had been bullied.

Figure 3
Having been bullied: qualified school-leavers compared to dropouts

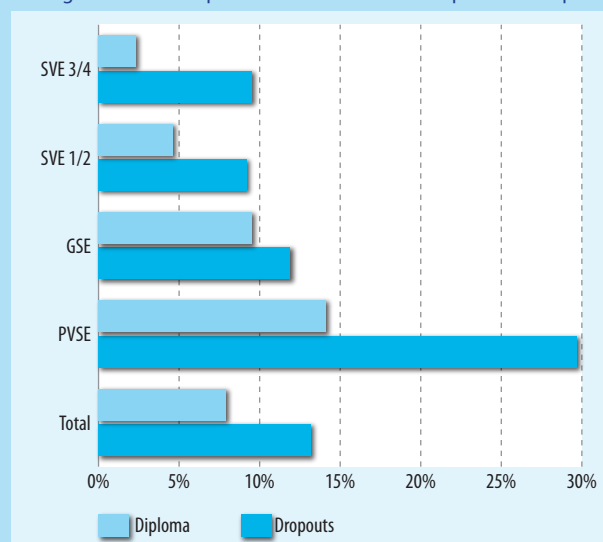


Figure 3 shows that all in all, dropouts indicated slightly more often that they had been bullied than qualified school-leavers (13% against 8%). This applies to dropouts and qualified school-leavers at all education levels. In particular in PVSE, the differences between qualified school-leavers and dropouts are large: 30% of all PVSE dropouts said that they had been bullied, against 14% of the qualified PVSE school-leavers. In the group of 'qualified school-leavers at SVE Levels 3/4', hardly anyone had been bullied (2%).

When pupils (whether dropout or qualified school-leaver) were bullied, this was generally because of their appearance (5% of the dropouts, 4% of the qualified school-leavers) or because of an illness or disability (3% of the dropouts, 1% of the qualified school-leavers). Religion or sexual inclination was hardly ever reported as a reason for bullying (0.7% of the dropouts, 0.4% of the qualified school-leavers). Compared with qualified PVSE school-leavers, PVSE dropouts were bullied more often in particular because of their appearance (12% against 7%) and their illness or disability (9% against 1%).

4. Current occupation

After approximately eighteen months the majority of all dropouts indicate that their main activity was work (37.5%) or that they had gone back to school (35.4%) (see Table 5). This can be deduced from the answers given to the question 'What are you doing at the moment' in the questionnaire. Although, strictly speaking, this does not mean that 37.5%

belongs to the working population, the answers to this question give a good indication of the main occupation of the respondents. Just like the qualified school-leavers, most dropouts from SGSE/PUE and PVSE return to the education system; approximately 70% of them was doing a course at the time of the survey. SVE dropouts were clearly more active on the labour market. Even though they did not have a basic qualification either, some 49% of the school-leavers at Levels 1/2 and almost 47% of those at Levels 3/4 indicated that they had a job at the time of the survey. Another striking fact is that among dropouts at SVE Levels 1/2, a relatively large group of youngsters indicated that they were neither working nor doing a course.

That there is a relationship between the reasons for dropping out and the personal situation of respondents at the time of the survey, appears from Table 6. The dropouts who stopped their studies because of health complaints, personal problems or care duties, were the most likely ones to indicate that they were neither working nor studying at the time of the survey. Most of the youngsters who had dropped out because they preferred the labour market, had a job. However, the table also shows that not all who had chosen the wrong course in terms of type or level, had chosen

a more appropriate course and re-entered the education system. Many of these indicated that their occupation at the time of the survey was 'work'.

Of the entire group of dropouts, just under 40% were presenting themselves on the labour market. On average, one in five is unemployed; among PVSE dropouts on the labour market, the figure is as high as approximately 36%. The quality of the jobs found was also far from perfect. Table 7 shows a number of major labour market indicators for both dropouts and qualified school-leavers who did obtain a basic qualification at SVE Level 2. Across the entire group of dropouts, more than half had a temporary job, and almost 55% was satisfied to very satisfied with the job. Among the qualified school-leavers, the percentage of those who had a temporary job was considerably lower, and 65% indicated that they were satisfied to very satisfied with their current jobs. Dropouts were slightly more often in paid employment than school-leavers who did have a basic qualification. The large difference between entering the labour market with or without a basic qualification is reflected in particular in the wages: qualified school-leavers at SVE Level 2 earn considerably more than dropouts

Table 5
What are they doing at the moment of survey? (%)

	GSE	PVSE	SVE 1/2	SVE 3/4	Total
Work	12	9	49	47	38
Study	70	73	15	27	35
Combination of working & learning	6	4	4	7	5
Other	12	15	32	19	22
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 6
What are they doing at the moment of survey, by most important reason for dropping out (%)

	School-related causes	Mental and physical health complaints	Personal problems	Wrong course	Course too hard	Labour market	Care duties	Moved	Other
Work	43	22	28	34	43	68	33	14	37
Study	37	36	34	47	38	11	20	66	39
Combination of working & learning	5	5	3	8	5	5	0	0	4
Other, nl.	15	37	35	11	15	16	47	20	21
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7
Labour market indicators

	Dropouts					SVE 2 qualified
	GSE %	PVSE %	SVE 1/2 %	SVE 3/4 %	Total %	
Unemployment	25	36	26	13	20	8
Temporary appointment	41	64	60	54	56	38
Paid job	85	56	74	76	75	64
(Very) satisfied with job	63	62	55	54	55	65
	€	€	€	€	€	€
Hourly wages	7,48	5,25	7,41	7,31	7,26	9,78
Monthly wages	872	657	1.072	969	991	1.412

without a basic qualification. The former have hourly wages of €9.78, whereas the latter earn only €7.26 per hour.

Figure 4 shows that a large part of the jobs consists of unskilled work, that is, jobs that do not require any diploma. This is the case in particular among PVSE dropouts. As can be seen in Table 7, GSE⁵ dropouts do best in relative terms, also where the required level for the job found is concerned.

Figure 4
Required education level for current job

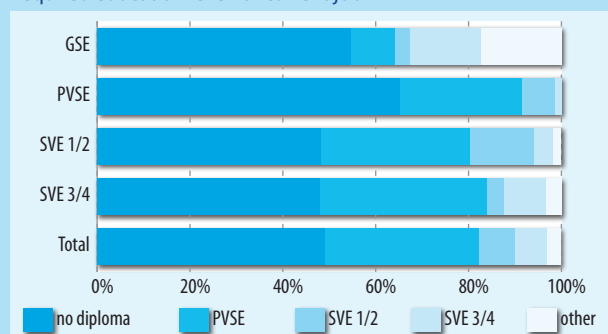
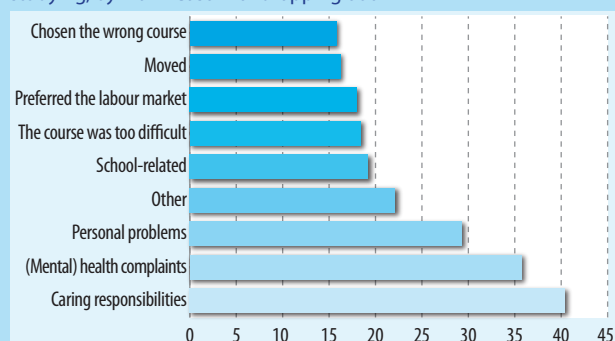


Figure 5
Percentage of dropouts neither involved in the labour market nor studying, by main reason for dropping out



That there are differences in the success on the labour market between dropouts and qualified school-leavers, is to be expected. Table 8 also shows that the inactive group is relatively much larger among the dropouts than among the qualified school-leavers. Of all dropouts, some 64% have a job or are doing a course, almost 8% are looking for a job and almost 28% have no job, are not doing a course and are not looking for a job either. Among the comparable qualified school-leavers, this percentage is less than 9%. Looking at the reason for dropping out (see Table 8), it appears that in particular among those who left school because of health or personal problems, and among those who dropped out because of care duties, many are neither involved in the labour market nor studying. Pupils who had stopped because they had initially chosen the wrong course, as expected, usually returned to the education system.

5. Plans for the future and regrets

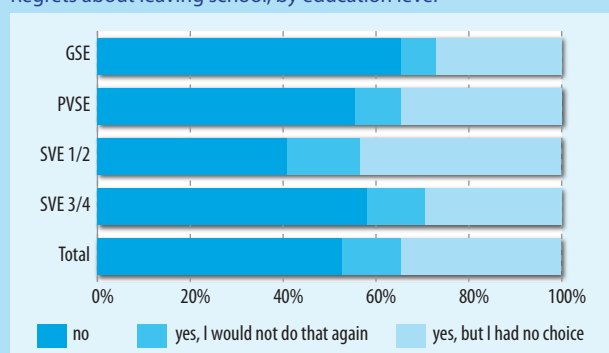
An important question is to what extent dropouts have permanently left the education system. Table 9 shows what plans for the future respondents had with respect to their educational careers. The table indicates that there is a considerable difference between dropouts from GSE and PVSE on the one hand, and SVE dropouts on the other. Only a small part of the GSE (5.2%) and the PVSE (9.8%) dropouts had no intention of returning to the education system in the future. Among the SVE dropouts, this group is considerably larger. A smaller part of the latter group also indicated that they were doing a course or had already registered for a new course. This will be due partly to the fact that former SVE pupils, in spite of the lack of basic qualification, are more labour market-oriented than GSE and PVSE dropouts.

As the table shows, doubts about which course to choose is an important reason why part of the respondents had not started a new course yet. Expenses also play a major role; for almost one quarter of the respondents who were neither doing a new course nor had registered for one, the costs involved in embarking on a new course had stopped them from doing so. Another common reason is 'personal circumstances'. Looking at the factors that might contribute to the decision to do another course, it turns out that these are manifold. A contribution towards the study costs is one of these factors; another important factor is the possibility of combining studying and work. More support, both in the process of choosing a course and during the course itself, may also contribute to higher education participation rates among dropouts.

Figure 6 shows to what extent dropouts later regretted their decision to leave school. Strikingly, only a small part of the dropouts - 12.6% for the group as a whole - indicated that they regretted their decision in the sense that they would not make the same decision again. This group is relatively the largest among SVE Levels 1/2 dropouts. Approximately 35% indicated that, although they had regrets, circumstances had left them no other choice at the time, implying that they would (have to) take the same decision again. Compared to the last survey, a shift has taken place. The group who had regrets but could not have done anything else, has increased by some 8% points, while each of the other two groups decreased by some 4% points. This means that the group who had real regrets may have shrunk, but the group who had no regrets at all has also decreased and relatively more youngsters were 'forced' to stop.

5. GSE equals the Dutch term AVO.

Figure 6
Regrets about leaving school, by education level



To what extent dropouts later regret their decision to drop out of the course they were taking, depends largely on the reason why they stopped. They have the least regrets if the

main reason was that they had chosen the wrong course (see Table 10). Similarly, the main reason for dropping out is also often the explanation for the high percentage of respondents who stopped their courses more or less involuntarily. A little more than 40% of the dropouts who had stopped because of care duties, indicated that they regretted this, but that they had had no other choice; among those who stopped because of health complaints, this is also a large group (almost 36%).

These figures may also provide an explanation for the relative increase of the group who stopped involuntarily, compared to the previous year. Health complaints and care duties are reasons that government institutions and schools cannot easily influence. If schools, by providing better support when pupils choose a course and better coaching, were able to have a positive influence on the number of dropouts, the group of those who leave school because of health complaints or care duties, will grow in relative terms, in spite of possibly increasingly efficient policies.

Table 8
Proportion of school-leavers that is neither active on the labour market nor studying, by last education level (%)

	Working or studying	Dropouts			Total	Qualified school-leavers not available on the labour market nor studying
		Looking for work ¹	Not available on the labour market nor studying			
GSE	76	3	21	100%		7
PVSE	72	5	24	100%		6
SVE 1/2	53	14	33	100%		12
SVE 3/4	66	6	28	100%		9
Total	64	8	28	100%		8

¹ Unlike the unemployment rate, this percentage is based on the full group of dropouts, not just the group that is available on the labour market, and hence it is not equal to the unemployment rate.

Table 9
Study plans for the future (%)

	Is registered with a school	Intends to but does not know yet which course and when	Is doing a course	No intention to study	Total
GSE	20	34	42	5	100%
PVSE	13	41	37	10	100%
SVE 1/2	11	54	14	22	100%
SVE 3/4	8	48	28	16	100%
Total	11	47	26	16	100%

Table 10
Regrets the choice to leave school, by main reason for dropping out (%)

	No	Yes, I would not do that again	Yes, but I had no choice	Total
School-related	75	6	19	100
Physical or mental health complaints	53	11	36	100
Personal problems	57	14	29	100
Chosen the wrong course	79	5	16	100
Course too hard	76	6	18	100
Preferred the labour market	74	8	18	100
Care duties	44	16	40	100
Moved	74	10	16	100
Other	70	8	22	100

6. Conclusions

This fact sheet summarizes the reasons for dropping out, the situation at school, current occupation and plans for the future of unqualified dropouts. The main findings include:

- School-related physical or mental health complaints constitute the main reasons for dropping out;
- In particular among pupils who skip school because of personal problems, truancy may be an early signal for dropping out;
- Dropouts indicate slightly more often than qualified school-leavers that they were bullied at school;
- Some 13% of all dropouts indicate that they regret their decision to abandon the course they were doing.

Annexes

Table B1
Respondents' background characteristics (%)

	GSE	PVSE	SVE Levels 1/2	SVE Levels 3/4	Total
Gender					
male	49	60	52	40	49
female	51	41	48	60	52
Ethnicity					
Western immigrant	12	8	6	8	8
Non-Western immigrant	10	18	20	14	16
Indigenous	78	74	73	78	76
Family situation					
Two-parent family	64	54	44	48	49
Single-parent family	21	30	26	21	24
I live on my own	9	3	14	21	14
Other, namely	5	14	16	11	13
Language spoken by parents					
(almost) always Dutch	78	70	62	71	69
Dutch and another language	9	13	13	12	12
(almost) always another language	2	4	5	2	3
Not applicable	11	13	20	14	16
Parents' education level					
<i>Father</i>					
Primary education	5	7	12	10	9
Lower professional education	12	27	35	33	30
Secondary education	8	9	8	7	8
Secondary vocational education	18	26	29	24	25
Higher education	57	32	16	27	28
<i>Moeder</i>					
Primary education	2	8	13	10	10
Lower professional education	16	24	32	38	31
Secondary education	11	10	11	7	9
Secondary vocational education	27	33	31	27	29
Higher education	43	25	12	18	20
Children					
Yes	1	2	14	7	8
No	99	98	86	94	93

Table B2

Main reasons for leaving school prematurely, including classification by main categories* (%)

		GSE	PVSE	SVE Levels 1/2	SVE Levels 3/4	Total
School-related causes	problems during traineeship/work placement (e.g. dismissal)	1	0	9	5	5
	I had problems with teachers/school management	6	8	5	3	5
	I had problems with other pupils	0	3	0	1	1
	I did not feel safe at school	1	4	0	0	1
	the course was badly organised	8	4	6	10	7
	(I received insufficient support)	2	1	1	0	1
	(quality of teaching was bad)	0	0	0	0	0
	(I was bullied)	0	1	0	0	0
	I wanted to shift courses	7	7	5	4	5
	the content of the course was not what I wanted (after all)	2	2	10	18	11
	I thought the level of the course was too low	0	3	2	4	3
	(indication special education)	1	2	0	0	0
	the course was too difficult and/or I failed the finale examination	17	7	6	3	6
Subtotal		45	40	44	48	45
Physical or mental health complaints	illness	9	6	6	7	7
	addiction problems	2	2	4	1	2
	mental problems	13	19	5	8	9
	(disability)	0	0	1	0	0
Subtotal		24	27	15	16	18
Personal problems	relational problems/family problems (e.g. parents' divorce)	5	8	6	4	5
	contact with the police/law	0	1	2	1	1
	(financial reasons)	0	0	0	1	1
	pregnancy	0	1	4	4	3
	combining school and caring for children and/or family, was too much	0	1	1	0	1
Subtotal		5	11	13	10	10
Labour market	I preferred to work	3	3	12	10	9
	I needed an income, so I started working	2	1	6	4	4
Subtotal		5	4	18	14	13
Other	I moved house	10	5	1	1	3
	other	11	11	8	11	10
	(school forced me to stop)	1	2	1	0	1
Subtotal		21	18	9	12	13
Total		100	100	100	100	100

* A number of respondents chose 'another main reason, namely' as main reason for leaving school prematurely. The answers given by these respondents were classified in existing or new categories as much as possible. These new categories were marked in the table by means of brackets '(...)':

Table B3

Reasons for truancy, including classification by main categories* (%)

		GSE	PVSE	SVE Levels 1/2	SVE Levels 3/4	Total
School-related causes	(Bullying)	0	3	0	2	1
	(School, other)	6	4	2	3	3
	(I was scared)	0	2	0	0	0
	(Problems in class)	0	1	1	2	1
	(Lessons, cancelled)	0	2	1	3	2
	(Problems with teachers)	2	3	1	1	1
	Some lessons were uninteresting	25	10	18	27	22
	Entire course uninteresting	8	7	17	19	16
	(Lessons too easy)	1	1	2	1	1
	(Lessons too difficult)	0	0	1	1	1
Subtotal		42	32	43	58	49
Physical or mental health complaints	Too tired	15	16	11	12	12
	(Illness)	1	1	1	2	2
	(Mental problems)	5	7	2	3	3
	(Addiction)	1	0	2	0	1
Subtotal		22	24	16	17	18
Personal problems	(Home environment)	5	4	3	2	3
	(Private)	0	1	2	2	1
	(Pregnant)	0	0	1	0	1
Subtotal		5	6	5	3	4
Labour market	Preferred to work and earn money	2	5	13	6	8
Subtotal		2	5	13	6	8
Other	Preferred to spend time with friends	16	21	12	7	11
	Preferred to do sports	3	1	0	1	1
	Other	10	11	9	7	9
	(Multiple reasons)	2	1	1	1	1
Subtotal		31	34	22	16	22
Total		100	100	100	100	100

* A number of respondents chose 'other, namely' as main reason for skipping school. The answers given by these respondents were classified in existing or new categories as much as possible. These new categories were marked in the table by means of brackets '(...)'.

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